

PROGRAMMATIC DEIS SEISMIC SURVEYS
IN THE BEAUFORT AND CHUKCHI SEAS
PUBLIC HEARING/MEETING

Anchorage, Alaska
Taken April 10, 2007
Commencing at 7:07 p.m.

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Taken at
Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
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Anchorage, Alaska

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2 Rance Wall
 Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation
3 Minerals Management Service
4 Ken Hollingshead
 Fisheries Biologist
5 National Marine Fisheries Service
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7 Taken by:

8 Mary A. Vavrik, RMR
9

10 BE IT KNOWN that the aforementioned proceedings were taken
11 at the time and place duly noted on the title page, before
12 Mary A. Vavrik, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary
13 Public within and for the State of Alaska.
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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MR. WALL: Okay. I guess we will go ahead
3 and try to get this started. This is a public hearing.
4 We are going to try to start the public hearing here.
5 This is for the draft programmatic EIS for seismic surveys
6 for the Chukchi and the Beaufort Seas. These projects are
7 being done jointly with National Marine Fisheries. Ken
8 Hollingshead is here representing them. My name is Rance
9 Hall, and I'm with the Minerals Management Service. And
10 we have Mary Vavrik here that's a court reporter that will
11 take any kind of testimony or anything.

12 Testimony here will be taken, and then you can also
13 send in written comments. And those will be accepted
14 through May the 14th, up to May the 14th. So if you have
15 anything that you want to send in and you don't want to
16 say it tonight, you can still send it in via the mail.

17 So the purpose of this would be for us to hear what
18 the public has to say about the draft EIS that we sent out
19 earlier. And so with that, I'm not aware that anybody
20 specifically signed up to testify. Is there anybody that
21 wants to do that that's here that we have missed that has
22 an interest in it?

23 MS. CAREN RAE: I don't want to testify,
24 but I have a question. Is it your plan to kind of go over
25 the highlights of the draft EIS here tonight? Is that

1 going to happen?

2 MR. WALL: Not really, no. I mean, it's,
3 yeah, mainly just to get input from the public.

4 MS. CAREN RAE: Okay.

5 MR. WALL: Now, with that being said, if
6 we want to -- if no one right now wants to do testimony --
7 if someone does come in and they want to, we can go into a
8 formal -- we could go into an informal and off-the-record
9 situation and talk.

10 MS. CAREN RAE: Oh, okay. I have just
11 been to other things like this with other agencies where
12 they have started out with kind of an overview of what was
13 in the document and then took comments, so that was the
14 basis for my question.

15 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: In most cases, what we
16 normally see is that they have a public meeting beforehand
17 where they have charts and stuff and people are there to
18 discuss the subject matter. Experts are there to discuss
19 those parts that they were -- that they had their hand in
20 writing or understood or the timetables, et cetera. But
21 then during the public hearing session there was not that
22 dialogue that went on. The only questions and answers
23 that were normally taken were technical ones like what
24 your timetable might be, et cetera. But we don't get into
25 the actual aspects of what's in the EIS because that leads

1 to secondary questions, and then we are into discussion on
2 the -- on the merits of the EIS, et cetera.

3 So right now this is mostly as an input to us so that
4 we can get the comments for future work and writing the
5 final environmental impact statement.

6 MS. MARILYN CROCKETT: I did have a
7 question with regard to timetable. Did you say that you
8 can walk us through what the timetable is during this
9 public hearing process?

10 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: Yes, we can. From
11 memory, the comment period ends on May 14th. We then
12 write a final environmental impact statement. We have to
13 respond to the comments and responses. That period can
14 take an indeterminate amount of time, depending on the
15 detail, level of detail, and number of different kinds of
16 comments that do come in. The final environmental impact
17 statement then goes through a clearance process. That
18 clearance process can take 30 to 45 days because it goes
19 to two agencies for clearance. It's then noted by -- when
20 it clears, it goes to the Environmental Protection Agency
21 which puts a notice in the Federal Register. There is
22 then a 30-day cooling-off period before the action is
23 effective and a record of decision is complete.

24 MR. JOHN DAVIS: So if we comment here, do
25 these -- you will respond back to our comments, either

1 with the written or verbal here; is that what I
2 understand? You said you have to respond to the comments.

3 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: The comments that we
4 receive either written or verbally here will be responded
5 in the final environmental impact statement, that's
6 correct.

7 MS. BETH IPSEN: So, then, do you have an
8 estimate? Do you have like a target date at least for
9 when the final EIS will be finalized, or is it up in the
10 air?

11 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: We would like to have
12 it out as quickly as we can. It's totally unknown until
13 we see the comments that come in and the level of -- level
14 of detail that we have on the comments.

15 MR. WALL: What we thought we would do is
16 we would go off the record now, and if people want to just
17 talk, that's fine. If people do want to go on the record,
18 keep in mind that nothing that we talk about informally
19 here will be part of the record or be part of -- included
20 in the final EIS.

21 MS. BETH IPSEN: I've got a question.
22 Have there been public meetings, public hearings scheduled
23 regarding this?

24 MR. WALL: They are scheduled starting
25 next week in the Beaufort and the next week in the

1 Chukchi.

2 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: We have a list of those
3 that's now been published, I think.

4 MR. WALL: And written -- the dates and
5 everything are in your paper, too.

6 MS. BETH IPSEN: That's what this was,
7 too.

8 MS. MARILYN CROCKETT: The record of
9 comments that will be submitted during this comment
10 period, will that be publicly available? Will you have a
11 website or something that you can go and download the
12 comments that are submitted?

13 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: There is -- it is --
14 the documents that are received are all considered public.
15 There is no redacted -- as far as I know, there is no
16 redacted information. Milo might jump in here.
17 Occasionally some people decide that names and addresses
18 for privacy act information can be redacted, but the
19 comments themselves are all public, so they are made
20 available. At times when we find there is a great deal of
21 interest, they can be posted on a web page if we get a
22 request. The normal procedure that -- in my case what we
23 have is a -- we make a pdf out of an Adobe Acrobat
24 document, and we will make that available if we don't post
25 it on the website. The actual responses to the comments

1 would not appear -- would not be available until they are
2 published in the final environmental impact statement.

3 MS. BETH IPSEN: I think I want to clarify
4 my question that when you said the public hearing, is
5 there a way to explain what's -- what is in that document,
6 you know, that thick document? There is nothing -- no
7 kind of meetings to explain before this comment process?

8 MR. WALL: No, no.

9 MS. BETH IPSEN: And how can people get
10 ahold of that?

11 MR. WALL: We sent it to a pretty
12 extensive mailing list all over the North Slope and with
13 the normal people that get every other document that MMS
14 sends, and NMFS had a mailing list of their own that they
15 sent it to.

16 MS. JILL LEWANDOWSKI: It's also listed on
17 our website, the MMS website.

18 MR. WALL: Yeah, it's on the website, too.
19 That's right.

20 MR. JOHN DAVIS: I was reading in there
21 where this year you are proposing in one or more of the
22 alternatives that the -- there be blackout periods in
23 certain areas of the Beaufort Sea, some certain dates
24 between Cross Island and Kaktovik, Kaktovik and Canada.
25 That wasn't in there last year, was it?

1 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: We are not going to get
2 into that, but you are correct. It was not. We are not
3 here to get into a discussion and debate on what's in the
4 environmental impact statement.

5 MR. JOHN DAVIS: I was wondering if it was
6 there.

7 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: If you compare the
8 programmatic environmental assessment, which is the
9 previous document on this action, that was not in there.

10 MR. JOHN DAVIS: Okay.

11 MR. HOLLINGSHEAD: It sounds to me like
12 there is more of -- the questions are more of what we
13 would have informally than discussion of back and forth,
14 and if there is no objections, we would like to close the
15 record until we do get somebody who wants to testify.

16 MS. JOLIE HARRISON: I thought Rance
17 already did that.

18 MR. WALL: No. She's still taking
19 testimony because people keep asking questions before we
20 can get any kind of signal that there was agreement. No
21 objections? Then we are off the record now.

22 (Off the record.)

23 (Proceedings adjourned at 8:30 p.m.)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, MARY A. VAVRIK, RMR, Notary Public in and for
3 the State of Alaska do hereby certify:

4 That the foregoing proceedings were taken before
5 me at the time and place herein set forth; that the
6 proceedings were reported stenographically by me and later
7 transcribed under my direction by computer transcription;
8 that the foregoing is a true record of the proceedings
9 taken at that time; and that I am not a party to nor have
10 I any interest in the outcome of the action herein
11 contained.

12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed
13 my hand and affixed my seal this _____ day of
14 _____ 2007.

15

16

MARY A. VAVRIK,

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Registered Merit Reporter

Notary Public for Alaska

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19 My Commission Expires: November 5, 2008

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